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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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June 19, 2007

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

AMENDMENT TO COUNTY CODE GOVERNING THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY REWARD POLICY (ALL DISTRICTS) (3-VOTE)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

Approve introduction of an ordinance amending the Los Angeles County Code Title 4 - Revenue and Finance, to increase the reward amount to \$10,000; add a provision to extend rewards for a period not to exceed 180 days each; and to amend the membership of the Claims Review Committee by removing the District Attorney representative from participation on the Committee.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

On January 26, 1993, the Board of Supervisors established a reward policy that allows the Board to offer rewards of \$5,000 per case. The policy also allows the Board to increase the reward offers for particularly heinous crimes and/or where it appears the community is at great risk.

In recent years your Board has offered rewards of \$10,000 or greater, which has required a declaration to be contained in your motion indicating that the crime is particularly heinous and/or the community is at great risk. It is now being recommended that the reward policy be amended to increase the initial reward offer to \$10,000 thereby eliminating the need for these declarations.

The amendment will not prevent the Board from establishing rewards over and above the \$10,000 limit. However, you will need to include in your motion a declaration that the reward is particularly heinous and/or the community is at great risk.

It is also requested that the period for extending reward offers be increased for a period not to exceed 180 days each which will decrease the number of times the matter would need to be agendized for you to extend a reward offer. Extending the length of the reward filing periods would also provide more time for persons to submit information to law enforcement, as well as to file a claim with the Executive Office of the Board.

In 1999, the District Attorney's Office discontinued their participation in the Reward Committee meetings, stating that under the Rules of Professional Conduct [Rule 5-310(B)] there could be a potential conflict of interest. Rule 5-310(B) states that an attorney is prohibited, from paying, either directly or indirectly, for a witness's testimony contingent upon the outcome of the case of the content of the testimony. Therefore, it would be appropriate to remove the District Attorney representative from participation on the Claims Review Committee.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

Enactment of the ordinance will further the County's Strategic Plan Goal 2: Workforce Excellence, since extending the reward filing periods will decrease the amount of time required to monitor and approve rewards, thereby enhancing the productivity of the County workforce. It also furthers County Strategic Plan Goal 8: Public Safety, by encouraging more people to voluntarily come forward with information for law enforcement, which could lead to the arrest and conviction of the individuals who commit crimes, thereby increasing the safety and security of all residents in Los Angeles County by removing individuals who commit crimes from the community.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Pursuant to provisions of the County Code, the reward money is to be paid from the Board of Supervisors' discretionary funds in equal shares from each member's account. In particularly heinous crimes, or where it appears the community is at great risk, the Board may increase the reward offer.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Government Code Section 26207 specifically authorizes the Board of Supervisors to offer and pay rewards, payable from County funds, for the furnishing of information leading to the apprehension and conviction of persons who willfully destroy or damage property of the County or who commit within the County criminal acts against the person or residence of a public officer or employee. Section 53069.5 authorizes rewards for information leading to the apprehension of any person whose willful misconduct results in death or injury to any person or whose willful misconduct results in damage or destruction of property. Section 53069.7 more specifically authorizes rewards for persons coming to the aid of peace officers or providing information which heads to the arrest and conviction of persons who committed crimes against a peace officer. These code sections leave the amount of the reward and time limitations to the discretion of the Board of Supervisors.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES

The recommended action will enhance law enforcement's ability to arrest and convict individuals who commit crimes, thereby increasing public safety.

Respectfully submitted,



Sachi A. Hamai
Executive Officer

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c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel